

Appln. No. 09/696,114
Amendment dated April 27, 2004
Amendment filed subsequent to RCE

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Supplemental to filing a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) on January 29, 2004, Applicants' attorney, Robert P. Michal, conducted a telephonic conference with Examiner Hewitt on April 16, 2004. The courtesy of Examiner Hewitt in discussing the present application is acknowledged and appreciated. During the telephonic conference, claim 124 was discussed. It was suggested that claim 124 be amended.

In response, independent claim 124 is amended along the lines discussed during the telephonic interview with the Examiner. In addition, independent claim 142 is also amended along the lines discussed with the Examiner.

The Examiner proposed some stylistic amendments to claim 124 to place the claim in better form for allowance. However, since the Examiner's proposed amendments to claim 124 were not related to the patentability of claim 124, Applicant prefers to amend claims 124 and 142 in a slightly different manner than that proposed by the Examiner.

In view of the amendment of claims 124 and 142 along the lines discussed with Examiner Hewitt, claims 124 and 142, and

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each of the claims which are dependent thereon, are patentable over the references of record.

In view of the amendment of claims 124, 126, 130, 131 and 142, claims 124-165 are in form for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

NEW CLAIMS

New Claims 166 and 167 are added to the present application.

The present application now includes two (2) independent claims and thirty-nine (39) total claims, and the highest number of independent and total claims for which payment was previously made is twenty-two (22) and one hundred twenty-three (123) respectively. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that no additional fees are due for the presentation of claims 166 and 167. If any additional fees are due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 06-1378 for such sum.

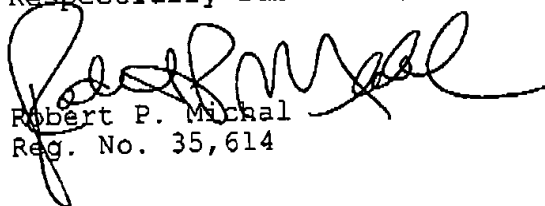
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If the Examiner disagrees with any of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to point out where there is support for a contrary view.

Entry of the amendment, allowance of the claims, and the passing of the application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,



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